

The Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic 2008 Executive Summary

The Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic (OHPIP) describes how Ontario's health care system will respond to an influenza pandemic. It sets out a comprehensive province-wide approach to health preparedness and response planning, and provides information to guide provincial and local pandemic planning. OHPIP endeavours to strike a balance between providing enough direction to ensure a consistent provincial health response to an influenza pandemic, and giving local jurisdictions the flexibility to respond to different scenarios that may arise during a pandemic.

OHPIP is a living document. It is reviewed annually (or more often if required) and revised to reflect current knowledge and best practices. The 2008 edition of OHPIP marks the fifth anniversary of pandemic planning in Ontario. It includes valuable new information on surveillance, the timing of antiviral treatment and antiviral stockpiles, the recommendations for occupational health and safety and infection prevention and control, the organization and delivery of influenza-related primary care (i.e., influenza assessment, treatment and referral). OHPIP 2008 includes revisions to planning guidelines for laboratory services, paediatric services and long-term care homes. It also provides new sections in the Acute Care Services chapter that provide advice on maintaining two critical health services: services for people with chronic kidney disease or acute kidney injury, and the province's blood services.

The process of developing OHPIP is managed and coordinated by the Emergency Management Unit (EMU) of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In the event of an influenza pandemic, the health care system's response will be managed out of a Ministry Emergency Operations Centre (MEOC).

While OHPIP focuses on pandemic planning for the health sector, it includes links to other ministries with emergency responsibilities such as Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and the Ministry of Labour. Because a pandemic will affect every sector of society, EMO has worked with other provincial ministries and their stakeholders to develop a Provincial Coordinating Plan for an Influenza Pandemic, available on the EMU website: www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic. That plan will address pandemic planning issues outside the health sector, and focus on maintaining critical infrastructure and meeting human needs.

How to Use OHPIP

OHPIP is organized into three sections and 22 chapters. The sections are:

- I. The Context for Planning for an Influenza Pandemic
- II. System-Wide Issues, Activities and Tools
- III. Setting-Specific Issues, Activities and Tools

Individuals responsible for overall pandemic planning will benefit from reading the entire plan. Individuals responsible for planning for one particular part of the health response (e.g., primary care services, long-term care homes) will also benefit from reading the entire plan, but they may choose just to read those sections and chapters that are relevant to their work.

For example:

Primary care planners will be most interested in Section I, Section II, and Chapter 11 of Section III.

People responsible for pandemic planning in **long-term care homes** will be most interested in Section I, Section II and Chapter 19 of Section III.

Chapter Overviews

The following overviews describe the type of information in each chapter, and whether the chapter has been updated (additions, minor changes) or revised (substantially changed) in 2008.

I The Context for Planning for an Influenza Pandemic

1. **Background:** provides basic information about influenza and pandemics, and summarizes the impact that an influenza pandemic would have on Ontario in terms of

the number of people who will become ill and need some form of health care.

2. **UPDATED -- Roles, Responsibilities and Frameworks for Decision Making:** describes the phases of an influenza pandemic, the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government, and the ethical and emergency management frameworks that provide the basis for Ontario's plan and response. In the 2008 edition, this chapter has been updated to include any changes in provincial emergency management and health legislation as well as the federal emergency legislation.
3. **Planning Goals, Approach and Assumptions:** sets out the goals, strategic approach and planning assumptions for Ontario's plan.
4. **UPDATED -- Resources:** provides a list of resources for pandemic planning.

II System-Wide Issues, Activities and Tools

5. **UPDATED Surveillance - Detecting and Monitoring the Spread of Influenza:** describes the surveillance activities in place now to monitor influenza in Ontario and detect a pandemic virus strain, as well as those that will be added or changed during a pandemic. The 2008 edition includes some changes to proposed surveillance for an influenza pandemic and provides some information on the web-based surveillance system that will be used for reporting during a pandemic. It also describes how surveillance information will be communicated to the field.

6. **Public Health Measures – Managing the Spread of Influenza:** describes the public health measures that Ontario will use during a pandemic, the triggers for implementing those measures, and the factors that will determine the type and duration of public health measures.
7. **REVISED -- Occupational Health and Safety and Infection Prevention and Control:** reinforces the responsibility of employers to provide safe working conditions, and sets out the range of steps that health care organizations, health care workers and the public can take to prevent the spread of influenza and to protect the health workforce. The chapter applies a hierarchy of controls approach to occupational health and safety during a pandemic, and identifies a range of strategies to reduce risk, including risk, assessments, education and training, modifications to the physical environment, changes to administrative and work practices, and appropriate use of personal protective equipment and other infection control measures.
8. **Optimizing Deployment of the Health Workforce:** describes a competency-based approach to health human resources planning for a pandemic, and the steps that planners, employers and health care workers can take to make the most effective use of knowledge and skills during a pandemic.
9. **UPDATED -- Antivirals and Vaccines:** sets out the policies for antiviral and vaccine supply, distribution and use, and describes the steps Ontario has taken to develop an antiviral stockpile as well as plans to acquire and distribute antivirals and vaccine during a pandemic. It also provides important information on the timing of antiviral treatment, antiviral stockpiles, and how antivirals will be distributed.
10. **Equipment and Supplies:** describes the steps that Ontario and health care organizations will take to ensure an adequate, secure supply of equipment and supplies during a pandemic.
11. **REVISED -- Influenza Assessment, Treatment and Referral:** describes the approach that Ontario will take to provide influenza-related primary care services during a pandemic (i.e., influenza assessment, treatment and referral services). It describes how Ontario will use existing primary care services – including Telehealth, family health teams, physicians (including paediatricians), other primary care practitioners, community health centres, walk-in clinics and pharmacies -- to provide influenza assessment, treatment and referral services. It also describes how communities will plan for alternatives, such as dedicated Flu Centres, in the event existing primary care services are overwhelmed due to the severity of the pandemic. The 2008 edition of OHPIP describes strategies that primary care services can use to meet the need for influenza-related services as well as the steps required to establish and staff Flu Centres.
12. **Communications:** describes the steps that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) will use to communicate with the public,

health care workers and other stakeholders during an influenza pandemic, and provides tools that health care organizations can use to plan their communications activities.

III Setting-Specific Issues, Activities and Tools

13. **Public Health Services:** sets out the steps the public health system will take to manage the demand for services during an influenza pandemic.
14. **UPDATED -- Laboratory Services:** describes how the laboratory system will function during a pandemic, including tests that will be provided and those that may be curtailed or reduced.
15. **Emergency Health Services:** describes the steps that Emergency Medical Services will take to maintain land and air ambulance services during a pandemic.
16. **Community Health Services:** includes a plan to maintain community-based mental health and addiction services during a pandemic.
17. **UPDATED -- Acute Care Services:** sets out approaches that acute care hospitals can use to manage their resources during a pandemic, including determining who will be admitted to critical care and how acute care settings will make decisions about limited resources. The 2008 edition of OHPIP puts information on managing and maintaining essential health services for a particular disease or population group in separate sections, which include: cancer services (developed in 2007), chronic kidney disease and acute kidney injury (new in 2008) and blood services (new in 2008).
18. **UPDATED -- Paediatric Services:** discusses the services required to provide care for children and pregnant women during a pandemic and provides new decision support tools for parents/caregivers and health care providers. The chapter has been updated to include more information and tools.
19. **REVISED -- Long-Term Care Homes:** sets out guidelines for long-term care homes designed to protect residents and staff during a pandemic, and help long-term care homes continue to provide high quality care.
20. **First Nations:** describes the collaborative efforts of the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada (through First Nations and Inuit Health), and the First Nations communities to meet the needs of First Nations communities during a pandemic.
21. **NEW -- Psychosocial Support:** provides the outline for a chapter on psychosocial support during an influenza pandemic for health care workers, patients and the public that is currently under development.
22. **NEW -- Natural Death Surge Planning:** outlines the steps in the death management process including the proper screening, recognition, reporting of and disposition of human remains at the local level.

The diagram in Figure 1 is a summary of the activities described in detail in the OHPIP by each of the WHO Pandemic Periods.

If you have any questions about the 2008 edition of OHPIP, or related pandemic planning initiatives, please contact the ministry's Emergency Management Unit through the Healthcare Provider Hotline at 1-

866-212-2272 (available Monday-Friday from 8:30am – 5:00pm) or by email: emergencymanagement.MOH@ontario.ca.

Figure 1: Summary of Pandemic Planning and Response Activities by Pandemic Period



